

From: Woody Hansen
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/23/01 1:18pm
Subject: Microsoft settlement; WHAT settlement?

To whom it may concern:

My comments based on a recent news article shown below:

> "Microsoft Reaches Private Antitrust Settlement
>
> By REUTERS WASHINGTON -- Microsoft said on Tuesday it had reached a deal to
> settle a
> raft of private antitrust cases against the company, which sources said
> would cost the software firm more than a billion dollars.
>
> The agreement with class action attorneys would require the company, which
> agreed to settle its separate 3-year-old case with the Justice Department
> earlier this month, to provide free software and computers to more than
> 14,000 of the poorest U.S. schools over five years, sources close to the
> case said."

The Justice Department is waaaaaaay off base on this one. What a sweet deal or "settlement" for Microsoft! What a blow to the market place in general, and to Microsoft's competitors in particular! THIS is JUSTICE?

This misguided "settlement" amounts to little more than a billion dollar investment for the FUTURE SUCCESS of Microsoft! It doesn't take a great scholar to see that this "settlement" provides Microsoft with an additional future client base of 14,000 units! It doesn't take a leap of imagination to realize that in time - probably in less than five years, certainly after five years - these 14,000 "units" will need upgrading of some sort or another.

In time these, 14,000 units will need their computer boxes upgraded. Hmmm, after using Microsoft products for FIVE YEARS, I wonder what operating system (Microsoft Windows?), what hardware (Microsoft compatible?), and what software (Microsoft?) these U.S. school administrators will want, even DEMAND, their school districts purchase as REPLACEMENTS? Is there any doubt? What a FUTURE windfall for Microsoft! Who do we have to thank? Right now, we have to thank the U.S. Justice Department.

It's not that giving computers to the poorest U.S. schools is bad - that's a commendable, if not somewhat idealistic - approach to education; what is UNBELIEVABLY SHORTSIGHTED, MISGUIDED, AND MISDIRECTED is the fact the GOVERNMENT - THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT - is simply FURTHER encouraging the monopolistic use of Microsoft products! This is a no-brainer in FAVOR of Microsoft. Whose side are you folks on anyway?

The old Scoreboard of Life would read: JUSTICE DEPARTMENT (read U.S. citizens) "0" ... MICROSOFT "14,000!"

I'll bet Bill Gates is laughing at the Justice Department all the way to the bank, if not NOW ... certainly in five years! Invest a billion dollars now, and reap the "investment" reward in five years! Most business people would LEAP at the same chance.

Let's not REWARD Microsoft for breaking the law! I agree we should not put Microsoft out of business entirely, but we need a better attempt at leveling the competitive playing field. As the decision now stands, Microsoft has little to lose in the present and MUCH to GAIN in the future! The current decision is reward oriented, not punishment oriented.

Please reconsider your position. Thank you.

Woody Hansen